



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION FACTS

Hazardous Drinking

Beer makes up 81% of the alcohol consumed in a hazardous way in the U.S. Greenfield, TK and JD Rogers. Who drinks most of the alcohol in the U.S.? The policy implications. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, in press.

The top 5% of beer drinkers consume 55% of all alcohol consumed in a hazardous fashion (5 or more drinks in a day). *Ibid.*

People who are unmarried, male, and under age 30 are at highest risk for hazardous drinking. *Ibid.*

People who drink hazardously are more likely to report suffering from a range of alcohol-related problems, including problems in health, work, and relationships. *Ibid.*

Underage Consumption

In 1998, about 10.4 million current drinkers were between the ages of 12 and 20, and more than 5 million of those were binge drinkers. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Summary of findings from the 1998 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, August 1999.

81.% of students in the 12th grade have had at least one drink of alcohol during their lifetime. More than half (52%) have had at least one drink in the past 30 days. 29.8% reported having had their first drink (other than a few sips) before the age of 13. Johnston, et al. National survey Results on Drug Use from the Monitoring the Future Study. NIDA, 1998.

Orange County Drinking Rates

More than 60% of Orange County survey respondents reported that they have consumed one or more alcoholic drinks within the past month. Orange County current drinking rates (61.8%) are slightly higher than rates for both California (59.1%) and the nation (57.1%). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on-line prevalence data, CA, 1996. SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 1997. Orange Countywide Health Needs Assessment, Spring Report, 1999. www.oc.ca.gov/ochna/

Nearly 17.2% of Orange County survey respondents have engaged in binge drinking in the past month – this percentage translates to approximately 340,000 adults. *Ibid.*

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College Students and Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is defined as “the consumption of five or more drinks in a row on at least one occasion.” Prevention Primer: An encyclopedia of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention terms. Rockville, MD: National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, 1993.

College binge drinking rates:

48% of men

39% of women

47% of whites

38% of Latinos

25% of Asian/Pacific Islanders

18% of African Americans

37% of “other” ethnic groups

Wechsler, et al. Changes in binge drinking and related problems among American college students between 1993 and 1997: results of the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study. *Journal of American College Health* 47:57-68, 1998.



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